

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of providing anti-theft protection for an electrical device installed on a body, comprising the steps:

(a) fixing to said body an electrical chip having a unique identification number identifying said body;

(b) electrically connecting said electrical device to said electrical chip in a manner such that removal of the electrical device from said body automatically interrupts the electrical connection of the electrical device to the electrical chip;

(c) and disabling the operation of said electrical device whenever its electrical connection to said chip is interrupted.

2. The method according to Claim 1, wherein step (c) is performed by providing the electrical device with a microprocessor, and programming said microprocessor to require that the unique identification number of said electrical chip be read to enable operation of said electrical device.

3. The method according to Claim 1, wherein said body is an automotive vehicle.

4. The method according to Claim 1, wherein said step (a) is performed by fixing said electrical chip to said body in an irremovable manner.

5. The method according to Claim 1, wherein said step (a) includes housing said electrical chip within a plug, and irremovably inserting said plug into a bore formed in said body.

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6. The method according to Claim 1, wherein said electrical device is a controller of a vehicle refueling system installed in a vehicle.

7. A method of providing anti-theft protection for a controller of a vehicle refueling system installed on a vehicle, comprising the steps:

(a) fixing to said vehicle an electrical chip having a unique identification number identifying said vehicle;

(b) electrically connecting said controller to said electrical chip in a manner such that removal of the controller from said vehicle automatically interrupts the electrical connection of the controller to the electrical chip;

(c) and disabling the operation of said controller whenever its electrical connection to said chip is interrupted.

8. The method according to Claim 6, wherein step (c) is performed by providing the said controller with a microprocessor, and programming said microprocessor to require that the unique identification number of said electrical chip be read to enable operation of said controller.

9. The method according to Claim 6, wherein said step (a) is performed by fixing said electrical chip to said vehicle in an irremovable manner.

10. The method according to Claim 7, wherein said step (a) includes housing said electrical chip within a plug, and irremovably inserting said plug into a bore formed in said vehicle.

11. A protection device to provide anti-theft protection for an electrical device installed on a body, comprising:

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a housing attachable to said body;

an electrical chip housed within said housing and programmable with a unique identification number for identifying said body;

electrical connections from said electrical chip within said housing for connection to said electrical device to be protected, said electrical connections being automatically interrupted upon removal of the electrical device from the body;

and a microprocessor programmed to read said unique identification number of the electrical chip and to disable operation of the electrical device upon failure to read said unique identification number.

12. The protection device according to Claim 11, wherein said housing is irremovably attachable to said body.

13. The protection device according to Claim 11, wherein said housing is in the form of a plug including a stem at one end for insertion into a bore formed in said body, and an enlarged head at the opposite end to be located outwardly of said bore;

said stem carrying said electrical chip and said electrical connections from the chip to the juncture of said stem with its enlarged head, so as to facilitate connection of the electrical connections to said electrical device.

14. The protection device according to Claim 13, wherein said plug includes a pair of expansion elements integrally hinged at one end to the tip of said stem, such that the expansion elements contract upon insertion of the stem into the bore, and thereupon expand to prevent removal of the stem from the bore.

15. The protection device according to Claim 11, wherein said housing includes two sections, one section being formed with at least one pin, and the other section being formed with at least one bore for receiving said pin with a press fit.

16. The protection device according to Claim 15, wherein said electrical chip is mounted on a printed circuit strip including a first section carrying said electrical chip, a second section having said electrical connections, and a juncture section joining said first and second sections.

17. The protection device according to Claim 16, wherein said printed circuit strip is of U-configuration, including first and second leg sections joined by a narrow juncture section.

18. The protection device according to Claim 17, wherein one section of said housing is formed with a pair of spaced recesses for receiving each of said leg sections of the printed circuit strip, and the other section of said housing is formed with a narrow recess for receiving said juncture section of the printed circuit strip.

19. A protection system including a protection device in accordance with Claim 11, in combination with an electrical device to be protected, said microprocessor being carried by said electrical device to be protected.

20. The system according to Claim 19, wherein said electrical device to be protected is a controller of a vehicle refueling system installed in a vehicle.

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